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AUTHOR Daresh, John C.
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ABSTRACT

Results of a study of the characteristics of professors who have recently accepted positions in university educational administration are presented. Implications for improved practice and further research are suggested concerning trends for the future for the professorship in educational administration, and in the larger field of administrative preparation. Letters of inquiry were sent to 45 universities with faculty openings in educational administration during 1983-1984; 33 universities responded. The vitae of 25 faculty members who were hired were reviewed, along with comments provided by the search committee chairpersons. Findings include: (1) the majority (20 of 25) of individuals hired were men; (2) the average age of incoming faculty was 37 years old, with a range from 27 to 59 years old; (3) only 8 of the 25 newly hired faculty members were relocating from one university to another; (4) there was a near even split between faculty with Ed.D. degrees and faculty with the Ph.D. degree; (5) no single institution was responsible for the academic training of most new professors (i.e., the professors came from a number of schools); and (6) in only two cases were faculty members hired by institutions from which they had received their doctorates. (SW)

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EMERGING TRENDS IN THE PROFESSORSHIP IN EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

by

John C. Daresh
Assistant Professor of Educational Administration
Department of Educational Policy and Leadership
The Ohio State University
Columbus, Ohio

Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of
the Mid-Western Educational Research Association
Chicago, Illinois

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EMERGING TRENDS IN THE PROFESSORSHIP IN EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

On two occasions during the last 25 years, major studies were conducted to determine the nature of the professorship in educational administration. In 1964, Donald Willower of Pennsylvania State University and Jack Culbertson of the University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA) edited The Professorship in Educational Administration, a collection of papers prepared to examine significant problems and issues facing the professorship at the time. Again, in 1973, Roald Campbell of The Ohio State University and Jackson Newell of UCEA carried out a major survey designed to determine the characteristics of professors who worked in UCEA and other institutions across the United States and Canada. Among the major issues explored, Campbell and Newell sought to discover more about the exact nature of the professorship in the field of educational administration. They wanted to know who professors were as far as general background characteristics were concerned, where the professors worked, what they did in their roles (either in terms of formal job expectations or as individualistic interpretations of their duties), and what these professors believed concerning the nature of the field of educational administration in general. Their study differed from the earlier work of Willower and Culbertson who wanted primarily to stimulate dialogue concerning some of the most pressing issues of the times. The Campbell and Newell work was different because it was an attempt to take a "snapshot" of the entire field of the professorship in educational administration as it existed at the time. It was not a study, however, of a specific segment of thefield, such as the characteristics of the individuals who had just entered the field and were expected to be those would likely shape the future of the field.

Although both the 1964 and the 1973 studies provided useful information that could be utilized to help define the nature of educational administration at the time, these investigations are now somewhat dated. New information is needed. As Willower and Culbertson noted in the Preface to their work, "...the concept of the professorship in educational administration will not stand still in the future. Indeed, if preparatory programs are to improve, the professorship must also improve" (Willower and Culbertson, 1964, p. v). It is because of this view, and in support of it, that this paper has been prepared as part of a continuing review of the status of the professorship.

During the 1983-84 academic year, more than 50 vacancies for professorships in educational administration at universities across the United States and Canada were announced. This suggested that an unusually large number of new professors were likely to be moving into the field for the first time, or that there was considerable movement taking place from one institution to another. This state of affairs in turn suggested that it was an appropriate time to take yet another look at the status of the field.

Objectives of the Review

The specific purposes of this paper are to, first, describe a recent study of the characteristics of professors who have recently accepted positions in university educational administration program faculties across the nation. Second, some of the major findings of this study will be presented. Finally, based on these findings, implications for improved practice and further research are suggested concerning trends for the future not only in the professorship in educational administration, but also in the larger

field of administrative preparation in general.

Design of the Study

During the 1984-85 academic year, ltters were sent to the chairpersons of the committees established to search for faculty in educational administration positions which had been announced at 45 different colleges and universities during the previous year, 1983-84. These letters described the nature and purposes of the study and asked search committees chairpersons to provide four types of specific information related to their recruitment and search processes. First, they were asked to provide a brief description and statement indicating whether or not someone had, in fact, been hired. Second, a brief description of the circumstances which created the opening in the faculties was requested. The purpose of this request was to ascertain if there were any trends discernible concerning program faculty expansions, shifts to other institutions, or merely normal replacements for retired or deceased faculty. A third item sought from each university was a copy of the current vita of each person hired. Finally, search committee chairpersons were also asked to provide a summary statement of the rationale that was used in making decisions regarding the selection of new faculty.

The listing of openings for the year, along with the names of search committee chairpersons, came as a result of a review of announcements for position openings that had been posted in The Chronicle of Higher Education, Educational Researcher, and the placement bulletins of a number of universities. In all, 33 of the 45 universities initially contacted responded to the request for information.

Responses which were provided to the initial letters of inquiry were reviewed and analyzed by seeking responses to the following focusing questions:

1. What are the personal characteristics of the individuals who were hired (i.e., age, sex, years of experience in the professorship, and so forth)?

2. What have been the academic preparation programs followed by newly hired professors of educational administration?

3. What types of experiences have incoming professors had in professional education, or other fields?

4. Are there any discernible patterns insofar as the circumstances prompting the filling of faculty vacancies are concerned?

5. Are further researchable questions raised regarding the probable directions of the field of educational administration training, based on the statements of search committee chairpersons or any of the other data provided?

Findings

The survey of institutions with faculty openings in educational administration resulted in information being returned from 33 of the 45 universities with announced vacancies during 1983-84. Twenty-five people were actually hired; ten universities indicated that their searches remained open or were considered to be still "in progress." Phone calls or follow-up mailings were sent to the universities which did not respond to the initial invitation to participate with the result that four more institutions indicated that internal personnel transfers had been made to assign faculty to cover open positions. No information was volunteered concerning the extent to which such shifts were to be viewed as but temporary solutions to long-term staffing problems.

The vitae of the new faculty members were reviewed, along with comments provided by the search committee chairpersons, to suggest a number of findings.

1. The majority (20 of 25) of individuals hired were men.

This finding that 80% of the new faculty members were men suggests that the professorship in educational administration continues to remain a male-dominated field. While the evidence shows that few women are joining the field, there appears to be some slight movement toward greater equity and a slight increase that may occur over time regarding the ratio of men and women involved with administrator preparation. In the Campbell and Newell study in 1973, by contrast, only 2% of the professors in UCEA and non-UCEA institutions were women. What is not known from the present data, of course, is whether or not the women now hired will remain in the professorship in five to ten years. Another interesting issue might be the determination of whether women now entering the profession are replacing male faculty members, or if, indeed, they might be among the first female faculty members ever hired in some university programs. Answers to such questions might provide some better notion as to the extent that any real change regarding sex balance and equity in the professorship is truly occuring.

2. The average age of incoming faculty is 37 years old, with a range from 27 to 59.

Although this finding might imply that there was a true range across many different ages, such is not truly the case. Only one of the new faculty members was in his 20's, and one new faculty member was in his 50's. For the most part, the professors included in this study were all in their early 30's.

3. Only eight of the 25 newly hired faculty members were relocating from one university to another

Another interesting feature of this finding was that the average time spent in faculty positions before the move to the current position was nearly eight years. Consequently, the automatic assumption that some faculty moved simply because they failed to make tenure in the normal six year period of initial appointment was not easy to support.

4. There is a near even split between faculty with Ed.D. degrees (11) and faculty with the Ph.D. degree.

A common assumption held by many is that the Ed.D. degree is a professional, or practitioner's degree not suitable as preparation for the professorship, while the expectation was clear that professors would always hold the "more scholarly" research Ph.D. The findings of this study indicate strongly that this traditional distinction continues to blur. In addition, two people in the sample also possessed J.D. degrees. At the time that data were collected for this study, one of the newly hired faculty members had not yet completed his doctorate. In that last case, the degree to be attained was a Ph.D.

5. With one exception, all newly hired faculty had served as a classroom teacher, principals, central office administrator, superintendent, state education agency official, or in some administrative position in higher education.

In fact, most faculty had a breadth of experience which included more than one type of earlier experience. One faculty member in the group, however, had proceeded directly from a B.A. program to a graduate program (combined master's and doctorate) without any full-time employment experience. This issue of previous employment experience was one of a major concern to this study because it is related to a large measure of the extent to which some commonly-held assumptions about the nature of the professorship were true.

It is a fairly widely-held belief, for example, that professors of educational administration have had quite a bit of "on-line" experience as practitioners. Such was not the case insofar as the sample for this study was concerned. While 18 of the 25 professors did, in fact, have some type of formal experience as administrators (either in K-12 settings or higher education), only five individuals had more than five years of administrative experience. Another existing belief is that the superintendency is almost an absolute requirement for the professorship. Only three of the 25 new faculty members had this experience. Incidentally, these three individuals were the oldest faculty members in the sample.

6. No single institution was responsible for the academic training of most new professors.

Twenty different institutions were responsible for granting doctorates to the newly-hired individuals. This finding seems to dispel the belief that professors tend to come from a rather small group of universities. There also appeared to be no discernible pattern of professors coming from what have historically been defined as "major research" institutions.

7. In only two cases were faculty members hired by institutions from which they had received their doctorates.

This supported the assumption that universities tend to hire from a pool of candidates not from their own institutions. Academic inbreeding still appears to be a taboo.

8. Explanations offered by search committee chairpersons as to why individuals were actually hired varied greatly.

From what most search committee chairpersons indicated, there was a desire to find candidates who provided evidence of maintaining appropriate balances among teaching, advising, research, and service responsibilities

and skills. A review of the vitae of new faculty was not helpful in determining whether or not the chairpersons' statements were accurate, although it did seem that there were some imbalances in the backgrounds of some of the faculty. For example, one new faculty member, hired at the associate level, had many years of successful public school administrative experience, but not a single publication other than a few mimeographed papers presented at state administrators' meetings over the years. An obvious and interesting additional question might be found in a re-examination of these same professors in a few years to determine if different skills had been emphasized on the job in response to institutional expectations.

9. Study data were inconclusive regarding the circumstances under which most faculty members were hired.

There was no way to determine if any largescale program expansions were taking place. Instead, most faculty seemed to be hired because faculty openings had occured through rather normal channels.

Implications of the Study

The findings of this study suggest some observations about the nature of the professorship in educational administration, and perhaps, the academic field of administrative preparation in general.

First, the "vision" of what might constitute the "typical" or stereotypic professor is supposed to look like is changing, and not one single image seems likely to emerge in the future. As evidence, one finding from this study seems particularly relevant. There are no universities which appear to be tarining the bulk of professors of educational administration. In the past, faculty have tended to come from such research institutions as Chicago,

Stanford, Columbia, or Wisconsin. This was true in both the Willower and Culbertson, and also the Campbell and Newell studies. With the exception of Wisconsin which trained three of the newly hired professors and Utah which prepared two, professors now appear to come from many different types of institutions across the nation. We can only assume that such diversity of professional preparation will ultimately lead to diversity of educational administration programs and program graduates.

Second, despite the fact that professors of educational administration are not now entering the field through the traditional routes of experience (i.e., as former superintendents), they are entering with other experiences that will likely enable them to make important contributions to the world of practice. What this will probably yield for the immediate future, however, is some degree of frustration for practitioners who do not see people like themselves entering the professorship. In the long run, however, we are likely to witness some subtle transformations in themissions and goals of educational administration training programs across the nation. The traditional view, for example, that educational administration was a field for those aspiring to be K through 12 school superintendents or professors of school administration may need to be redefined to include such possibilities as higher education administrators, or the preparation of administrators in non-traditional educational organizations, such as training divisions of major corporations.

On the other hand, the data from this study suggest that a certain amount of emphasis will continue to be placed on the practical foundations of administration. Evidence of this might be seen in the virtual absence of incoming professors without some type of professional experience. With the

one exception noted earlier, educational administration faculty simply are not drawn from the ranks of the "professional student."

Third, although there has been some suggestion in recent years that greater emphasis, expectations, and demands will be placed on the importance of basic research in educational administration (Bridges, 1972), this review of the characteristics of newly hired faculty does not show any discernible emphasis on the research backgrounds of the applicants. To the contrary, search committee chairpersons generally made a point of the fact that individuals were hired because they had a balanced background and were expected to contribute nearly equally in the fields of teaching, advising, service, and research and scholarship. It may be an interesting further analysis to see if differences tended to exist, however, when the total group of universities was categorized in the way that Campbell and Newell did in their study. In that earlier work, they noted that faculties of educational administration tend to take on identifiable global orientations. The first of these was the "Cosmoplitan" orientation and consisted of high primary commitment to scholarly research and writing with low commitment to service to practitioners in the field and/or teaching undergraduates. Second, the "Local" orientation was related to faculties where the highest priority was listed as that of teaching and advising graduate students. The third orientation, "Practice," was associated with a view that valued working with practicing administrators in the field as the most important activity. These orientations might be used as part of an analytic framework to review the data from this study to ascertain if any identifiable trends regarding professional responsibilities are evident. Are there, for example, still the same

expectations that only those with extensive previous records in research, publications, and scholarly productivity need apply at institutions with a "Cosmopolitan" orientation?

An additional implication to be derived from this study concerns what might be referred to as the strength, or perhaps viability, of the professorship in the first place. The long-standing view that professors of educational administration came basically from the ranks of retired school superintendents is clearly not an accurate description of the newly hired. Although, as it was already mentioned, nearly every person had demonstrated some skill and experience in a position in public schools or higher education before moving into the professorship, there is reason to believe that, based largely on the age of most new professors, a faculty position is now seen by many people to be a desirable career goal in itself. The professorship is not viewed necessarily as a "comfortable" thing to do in one's latter professional years.

Finally, an important question that still needs to be addressed is the determination, in a larger sense, of what the "vision" of educational administration is likely to be in the future. There are some interesting hints from these data that suggest, at least in the case of a few of the universities contacted, that some deliberate goals have been set, and that a coherent plan has been mapped out to meet the goals. As a result of that mapping process, a rational staffing plan has been undertaken. At most of the other universities in the sample, the procedures utilized in selecting new faculty appear to remain a process not on any long-term concern for what the field may, or should, look like. It is, therefore, important above all other issues that our field come to realize and understand its role and

purpose first, and that study be directed toward the issue of helping us to understand this role and definition better in the future.

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